

4/2/72

Dear Walter,

Not too long ago you asked me how I can live with so many futilities, so in the prelude to reminding you of one I give you a different kind of answer.

In six days I will be 59. Yesterday I planted eight fruit trees and transplanted two pines. My knees, today, suggest that 59 is an older age than I had thought.

Night before last, before going to bed, we switched to the Washington educational TV station, on which we get a poor picture but good sound. They were broadcasting a program on the Gary convention. At one point someone I could not make out called out, "What about Rap Brown?"

Good question, but not a new one for me, as you may recall. When I suggested a book, short and explosive, tentatively and perhaps poorly titled "The Rap Rap", there was no interest. When I suggested there was more than a book in this, if you saw, you alone saw.

It is a good question, what about him. The situation is now changed. The prospects for the book should be better. And because it would be keyed to a lawsuit that should attract attention, the prospects of collateral good should also be good.

I also wrote Rap's agent, but got no interest. I can't write his lawyer, who is too busy being his own celebrating and doing his own good things for personal reasons involving his hangup with Mark Lane. So, I do nothing about it. And the man thereby is jeopardized and what everyone forgets, two murders are not only unsolved but pinned on the victims.

All of this makes me wonder whether it is really I who live the futilities. True, I live under adverse conditions, with depressions and problems so multitudinous there is no day on which I haven't an abundant choice should I choose to worry. True, I write what can't be printed to find that long thereafter in some instances what I have written and almost forgotten suddenly comes interesting to others, like the Hampton-Clark case, the essence of which, as of today, I wrote when it happened.

But the real futility is not mine. There are other more apt designations, and they can and should include anguish.

But the futility, the real frustration, is that of others with fewer than 50 years. The tragedy is that in so many cases where what is so boldly talked about and not done could be done.

Recently, when I have had time to think, I have come to believe that the real frustration and the genuine futility is for those for whom detached rhetoric has become a thing unto itself, an end, not a means. So, ends are not reached.

Should any you know, perhaps such people as Haley, be interested in seeking an answer to the "What about Rap Brown" question other than a some point Amster, will to the best of his needlessly-limited ability, present in some court, I will not find it a futility to try and help and I will be more more frustrated that I am now if nothing comes of it.

I have always felt that the best chances for the weak in combat is not to defend but to attack. Defense is so easily overwhelmed when it is weak.

Best regards,

Harold Weisberg